

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 05499 01 OF 02 191315Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 MCT-01 IO-13 SSM-03
/087 W

-----101139 191319Z /43

O 191305Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5725
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS EG
SUBJECT: EGYPT OUTRAGED BY SIBAI MURDER

SUMMARY. SHOCKED GOE HAS YET TO MAKE ACCUSATIONS FOR
SIBAI MURDER, BUT OUTRAGED MEDIA BLAMING "PALESTINIAN
TERRORISTS". LIBYA AND IRAQ ALSO MENTIONED IN PASSING,
WHILE PRESS UNIFORMLY CALLS FOR RETRIBUTION. CONNECTION
WITH SADAT PEACE INITIATIVE CLEAR AND SIBAI QUICKLY
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 05499 01 OF 02 191315Z

BEING TURNED INTO MARTYR-HERO. EFFECT HERE WILL BE
FURTHER NATIONALISTIC CLOSING OF RANKS AND SUPPORT
FOR SADAT TO DEAL BRUSQUELY WITH PALESTINIANS AND
REJECTIONISTS IN BRINGING PEACE TO EGYPT. END SUMMARY.

1. MEDIA OUTPOURINGS. SIBAI MURDER DOMINATED OUTRAGED
CAIRO PRESS FEB 19. BLACK-BORDERED BANNER HEADLINES

CAST FURIOUS BLAME ON "PALESTINIAN TERRORISTS AND EXTREMISTS", ASSURING THEM "THEY WILL NEVER GET AWAY WITH IT. . . EGYPT WILL FACE TREACHERY WITH DECISIVE ACTION." REPORTS WERE WELL BEHIND EVENTS AND THIN ON GOE ACTIONS IN WAKE OF KILLING.

2. IMPACT OF SIBAI KILLING WIDE RANGING. HE WAS CLOSE TO SADAT AND MEMBER OF GOE INNER CIRCLE, EVEN IF NOT POLICY MAKER. SIBAI WAS PROLIFIC, WIDELY KNOWN AUTHOR, WELL LIKED BY MOST JOURNALISTS, EVEN THOSE WHO DID NOT ADMIRE HIS PUBLISHING SKILLS. HE WAS PROMINENT FORMER FREE OFFICER, WELL KNOWN TO MILITARY; A NASSER ERA STALWART WHO CHANGED WITH THE TIMES. SIBAI HAS BEEN FAMILIAR PUBLIC FIGURE FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS.

E. CABINET RELEASED STATEMENT FEBRUARY 18, MOURNING SIBAI DEATH AND ACKNOWLEDGING HIS SERVICES TO ARAB NATION. STATEMENT CONTINUED THAT "TREACHERY WILL NOT PASS UNPUNISHED. EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES WILL DEAL DECISIVELY WITH ANY ATTACK ON ANY EGYPTIAN ANYWHERE."

4. SIBAI QUICKLY BEING TURNED INTO MARTYR-HERO. SADAT DECORATED HIM POSTHUMOUSLY WITH ORDER OF REPUBLIC, WHILE TELLING PRESS OF HIS SEVERE SHOCK: "HE WAS LIKE A BROTHER TO ME." CENTER PARTY STATEMENT LABELED ASSASSINATION "BLOW TO WORLD STRUGGLE FOR PEACE, FREEDOM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 CAIRO 05499 01 OF 02 191315Z

OF EXPRESSION, DEMOCRACY AND CAUSE OF ASIAN AND AFRICAN PEOPLES."

5. BLAME. NEITHER SADAT NOR CABINET HAS MADE SPECIFIC ACCUSATION PENDING RECEIPT FURTHER INFORMATION. PRESS, HOWEVER, QUICKLY SETTLED ON EXTREMIST PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS AS ASSASSINS AND CALLED FOR STRICT MEASURES TO PREVENT "CANCER" FROM SPREADING MORE DEEPLY INTO PLO. ALL EDITORIALS DEMANDED PUNISHMENT "TO PROTECT HUMANITY FROM SUCH LOWNESS, COWARDICE AND BARBARISM."

6. MOTIVE. AKHBAR REPORTED RELEASED HOSTAGE HEARD KILLERS SAY "EVERYONE WHO WENT WITH SADAT TO JERUSALEM WILL DIE." GUMHURIYYA CHAIRMAN MOHASSEN MOHAMED RECALLED "BLACK JULY ORGANIZATION" (SIC) HAD DECIDED KILL ALL EGYPTIAN WRITERS OR JOURNALISTS WHO TRAVELED TO JERUSALEM WITH SADAT, AND MET IN BAGHDAD TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSASSINATIONS. THIS, ACCORDING MOHAMED, DESPITE FACT THAT EGYPT HAD PROTECTED "BLACK JULY" IN PAST "AFTER ALL THEIR CRIMES, MURDERS AND HIGHJACKINGS. LIBYA ANNOUNCED IT WOULD SEE TO IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSASSINATION SCHEME . . . TERRORISM IN NAME OF PALESTINE MUST END."

7. COMMENT: WHATEVER REASON SIBAI SELECTED FOR MURDER,
CONNECTION WITH SADAT PEACE INITIATIVE APPEARS CLEAR.
WE DOUBT MANY EGYPTIANS, ALREADY FED UP WITH "CARRYING
BURDEN OF PALESTINIANS" WILL IN THIS MOMENT OF GENUINE
OUTRAGE DISTINGUISH BETWEEN PALESTINIANS, PLO "MODERATES"
AND EXTREMIST GROUPS. NET EFFECT WILL BE FURTHER
TIGHTENING OF EGYPTIAN RANKS, HIGHTENED SENSE OF
NATIONALISM AND ADDED PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR SADAT TO DEAL

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 05499 02 OF 02 191316Z
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BRUSQUELY WITH PLO AND REJECTIONISTS IN BRINGING PEACE
TO EGYPT. EILTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MURDER, PALESTINIANS, JOURNALISTS, TERRORISTS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CAIRO05499
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780077-0360
Format: TEL
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780235/aaaabdzp.tel
Line Count: 166
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f21861d3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3543938
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EGYPT OUTRAGED BY SIBAI MURDER SUMMARY. SHOCKED GOE HAS YET TO MAKE ACCUSATIONS FOR SIBAI MURDER, BUT OUTRAGED MEDIA BLAMING \"PALESTIN
TAGS: PINS, EG, CY, (SIBAI, YUSUF)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f21861d3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014